

"I am the vine, you are the branches; abide in me and you will bear much fruit." John 15:5

Vine & Branches

November 2013 **The Great Reversal**

The Right Reverend
Robert L. Fitzpatrick
V Bishop of Hawaii

The Reverend
David J. Gierlach
Rector

The Reverend
Imelda S. Padasdao,
Priest Associate

The Reverend Dr.
Gerald G. Gifford,
Rector Emeritus

The Reverend Peter S. M. Fan,
Cantonese Language Priest

Hsiao Ying "Ajaon" Chen
Choir Director

Marie Wang
Organist

Katherine Crosier
Parish Administrator
Editor and Layout
Music Consultant

Caren Esaki
Senior Warden

David Kleinschmidt,
Junior Warden

Website:
www.stelizabeth720.org

Email:
stelizabethhawaii@gmail.com

by *The Rev. David J. Gierlach*

***"How long, O Lord, will I cry for help,
and you do not answer?"***

This plaintive wail comes not just from the ancient prophet whose bones have long since turned to dust, but it is today's cry of a 50 year old mom whose only child is many years into drug and alcohol addiction.

It is the wail that erupts silently from the 66 year old man whose mind is crystal clear, but whose lungs are giving out, as a machine pumps air into a hole in his throat, as he becomes more exhausted with each passing day.

It is the wail of wives existing in physically abusive marriages and children in the housing projects whose parents are dealing drugs and spouses who have long since forgotten how to talk with one another.

It is the cry of anguish heard from countless lips in Syria and Iraq and Afghanistan, and in Detroit and Chicago and Aiea.

***"How long, O Lord, will I cry for help,
and you will not listen?!***

I cry to you violence — and you do not save!"

At one time or another, nearly all of us may find ourselves crying out in words like these, wondering, perhaps, if there's anyone at all who is listening....

This wondering is not ours alone.

As Jesus hangs from the cross, he cries out from the depths of his being: "My God,

my God, why have you forsaken me?!"

Who hasn't traveled to those intersections in life where it seems we are indeed all alone, that the universe really is nothing more than a boundless void, with meaning being only what we can fashion out of our own wits, our own imagination.....

And yet it is precisely here, at this very intersection of faith and hopelessness, of desire and despair, where the reality of God, revealed in Jesus, becomes most profound.

Call it, if you will, the great reversal.

All year we've been walking with St. Luke, who, among all the gospel writers, seems most in tune with the GREAT REVERSAL that is God in Jesus.

He begins with Mary's revolutionary prayer as she carries in her womb the result of her mysterious encounter with God:

And I sometimes wonder, is her teenaged arm outstretched, is her fist clenched, as she prays.....

"He shows the might of His arm,

He scatters the proud in their conceit.

He puts down the mighty from their thrones,

and exalts the lowly.

***He fills the hungry with good things,
and the rich He sends away empty."***

The great reversal permeates Luke's



Rector's Message, continued

gospel; it becomes the very template of God's interaction with us.

The great reversal continues in Luke's Sermon on the Plain, which, unlike Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, has teeth that bite:

"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh...."

"But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full. Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way."

And so we hear, week after week with Luke, the strange reversals that begin to define the Kingdom of God.

The outcast are brought in, the prodigals are welcomed home, the unjust stewards are patted on the back and the righteously religious, the political big shots and the titans of business are left outside, scratching their heads at the incredible unfairness of it all.

We hear most especially in today's story of Zacchaeus, a great reversal if ever there is one, because this fellow's the chief tax collector.

Given Jesus' skewering of rich folks like me and you, you'd think that Jesus will be aiming right between Zacchaeus' eyes, because old Zach makes all of us look like pikers in the money department.

Think of it this way: if you thought last week's Guido was bad, just wait till you meet Zach!

He's the Godfather's Don Corleone to last week's loan shark Guido, because Zach is the CHIEF tax collector, and as the top banana, he's got a dozen Guido's under him, ripping off his own people, serving the great pagan occupier of Rome, and in the process making Zach very, very rich indeed!

Yet here it is again, another great reversal.

Imagine Marlon Brando's Don Corleone running like a kid up the nearest tree and hanging from a limb like a Christmas ornament waiting and trying to see the holy man from Galilee!

Imagine Don Corleone giving away half of his ill gotten gains to the poor and refunding everyone else quadruple what he stole.

When God shows up, every thing and every one has a chance to change.

And rather than skewering Zach because of his riches, Jesus evokes in Zach that very turning around, that going home by a

different way, that change of mind, that metanoia, that is and has been and always will be the very heart of Jesus' invitation — since the day he emerged dripping wet from the Jordan, having been baptized by John.

In Zacchaeus, the rich man passes through the eye of the needle, the hopelessly lost is found, and a dead man is brought back to life.

And for some of you, that is your experience too, the wonderful explosion of being made alive again by the finger of the Living God.

And yet, while sometimes the great reversal ends in joyful change; the great reversal can just as often bum rush us right up with the prophet at the rampart: clenched fists crying out blindly into the night.

Because sometimes, when God shows up, it's not all balloons and parades and shave ice; sometimes we collide with the God incarnate on the hot and sweaty road, nearing the end of that long journey to Jerusalem, on his way to the greatest reversal of all time.

While the apostles expect a revolution, and others look for angels to begin cascading down from the heavens, Jesus in these last days is preparing to take his throne on the hard wood of the cross, a halo of thorns is his crown, and there, the second person of the Holy Trinity, very God, and very man, suffers and dies, crying out to God, with the prophet, with that mom over her drug addicted kid, with the man exhausted by lungs that are failing, with the abused spouse, with the tortured children: "How long O Lord will I cry for help, and you do not answer!"

In Jesus, God knows the despair of abandonment that for all the world, we thought only we humans can know.

In Jesus, the ineffable, untouchable, unknowable Creator of all things, the One who at this very moment holds all things together, who is, even now, creating every

Rector's Message, continued

hair on your head — in Jesus, God is torn asunder, entering the deepest depths of human despair.

It is indeed the great reversal.

And yet, this is not the end of the story for Jesus, and nor, no matter what your circumstance, is it the end of your story either.

Exhausted from his wailing, the ancient prophet steps back from the brink and finds a place of stillness.

“I will stand at my watch post and station myself on the rampart
*** then the Lord answered me and said:

“Write the vision, make it plain on tablets.....

For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie; if it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay!”

At the intersection of faith and despair we are led into the depths of life's greatest mystery.

Somehow, it is only in the deep where, exhausted of our own efforts, delivered of our own solutions, it is there that God somehow reaches in, reaches around, and saves us.

The saving may not always feel like saving.

Sometimes the saving includes dying: to old ideas, to addictions, to control, to the seeming safety even abusive relationships can foster, and sometimes even the actual dying of physical death.....

But the wisdom of the great reversal is the assurance that no matter the circumstance, God is God, and God is always near, always finding a way through to life....yet very often in ways that are completely unexpected.

How could it be otherwise?

“The Father remains silent to the despair of the Son on the cross.

The Son lingers in the silence of death, in the stillness of the grave.

Only on the third day does God give an answer; but it is a resounding answer, an earth shaking vindication through the power of love.

The silence of God, in the face of fervent prayer, is always disturbing.

But that, it seems, is part of the trial of faith, a trial that God in Christ has himself submitted to.” B. Spinks, Feasting On The Word, 246 (paraphrased).

And so my friends, when you find yourself in the midst of a great reversal, whether it's a reversal that brings silly laughing disbelief or a reversal that turns all that you know and all that you are inside out — reach deep for the lifeline of faith — and hold tight to the God who is nearer to you than your breath, closer to you than the beating of your heart.

+amen



Bizarre Bazaar
Nov. 16 • 9 to 2

**Food, crafts, white elephant,
country store, plants,
fried noodles
and more!**

**Bring hangers
and plastic bags.**

**Special concert by the
Royal Hawaiian Band
at 9 am!**

**Don't miss this annual
fundraising event for
the Scholarship Fund.**

What better place on Halloween?



CALL US CRAZY (oh, you already have?) but what better place to recall those who have gone before us than in the historic Oahu Cemetery?! Sooooo, on Halloween Night, after dark, about 50 of us goulies (mostly young goulies) got ourselves there, with incense burning and candles lit (and boom box playing “When All Is Said



And Done” —THE PERFECT song for a graveyard visit, eh?) and spent some time with psalms prayed and readings read and loved ones remembered..... it was very cool indeed!

And of course, if you wanted a Costco pizza Halloween night, the only place to get one was at St. Elizabeth’s because, (well, if you need to ask), because we BOUGHT ‘EM ALL OUT!! Yes there were thousands, nay, millions of pizzas that night with our cheerful pizza delivery friends passing them out all night long!!



THEN WE ALL HEADED BACK to the church for a GRRRRREAT Trick or Trunk night with the kids all in costume (hey!, isn’t that Moses? hey! look, the Bishop! OMG it’s GODZILLA! —yes we had marvelous costumes that evening....) as the young ‘uns went from car trunk to car trunk getting treats, deciding whether to play a trick, and having an all round fun, safe and sugar-loaded Halloween.



Yes, there were kings and princesses and really cool carved pumpkins!



The Mural is Finished

TAKE A GANDER TO THE RIGHT and while you may think you're looking at scenes from a real life beach or Polynesian village, what you're actually seeing is the fantastic artwork produced by our outreach kids with the kind assistance and guidance of Fane and family and famed Hawaiian artist John "Prime" Hina with 808Urban. THIS MURAL ENCIRCLES what will soon become the new home of Kalihi Palama Health Center, right there on St. E's property, a great partnership as we work together to nourish the physical, mental and spiritual longings of our neighbors!

Drum Roll, please!

Through the generosity of the parishioners of St. Elizabeth's and Foodland's Community Matching Gifts Program, we received a check for . . .



\$8,479.45!

through the Give Aloha program in September! This includes \$6,985 given by St. Elizabeth's members, \$1,076.47 by Foodland and \$417.98 by Western Union.

Thank you all for your generosity!

"Monks ought not judge each other, because God judges us much more leniently than human beings are able to do."

Philoxenus of Mabbug, 6th Century bishop



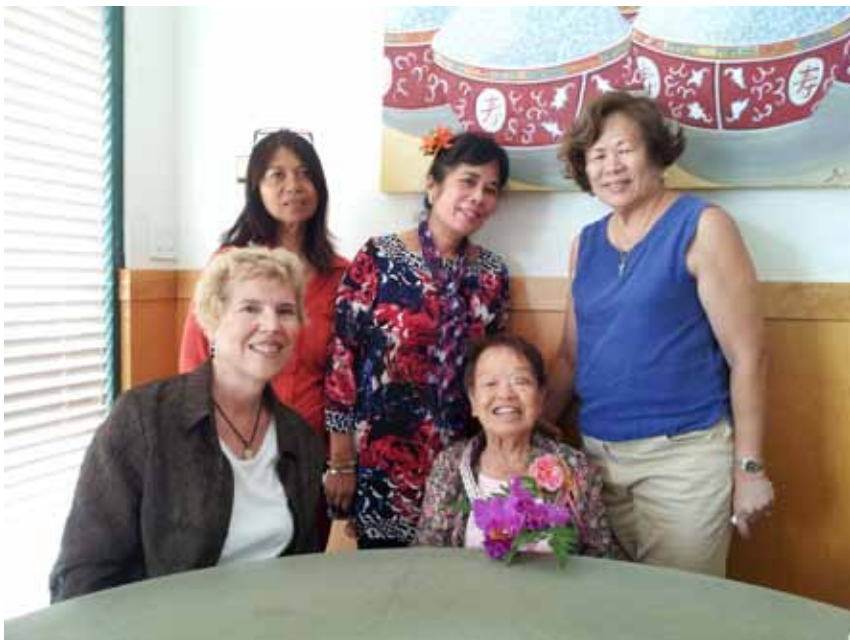


It quickly became clear that retired General George "No Surrender" Summers was the wrong choice to teach the new members class.

"Forbidden Fruits" always end up in jams."



95 Years Young!



Happy 95th Birthday to Bernice Kau, seated at right. Celebrating with her are Fran Kramer, Delphine Shea, Mother Imelda Padasdao and Gretchen Jong.

Awards Program

Nominations are being accepted for the Senior and Junior Cross Awards to recognize members who contribute to the betterment of the church.

Nominees must be regular, baptized and contributing members of St. Elizabeth's who participate in church activities, i.e. work days, Altar Guild, Shim Hall functions, etc.



Nominations should cite current accomplishments and be submitted to **Roy Chee**, Recognition Committee Chair, no later than December 1st to be considered for this year.

An Author in our Midst

Fran Kramer just published a mystery novel for kids ages 10 to 15 called *Dead Men Do Tell Tales*. Kids will get a scary page turning read and at the same time discover how intuition and dreams can be used to problem solve and help heal grief. 10% of the sales profits will go to St. Elizabeth's so pray that the book will sell well! The book can be purchased directly from Fran at a discount or can be ordered at all your favorite online bookstores like Amazon and Barnes and Noble.



What's the best vitamin for a Christian?



Welcome to the Lord's Family

On October 20th we welcomed the following persons through the Sacrament of Baptism: **Maymian Pulusou, Tanginoa Manoa Toli, Jordan Higa-Paulo, Alina Paulo, and Kaleihua Langi.**

Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit you have bestowed upon these your servants the forgiveness of sin, and have raised them to the new life of grace. Sustain them, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit. Give them an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works. Amen.



You certainly have a gift for sermon titles.



Attendance

Wednesday, October 2	17
Sunday, October 6	188
Wednesday, October 9	22
Sunday, October 13	165
Wednesday, October 16	15
Sunday, October 20	183
Wednesday, October 23	16
Sunday, October 27	189
Wednesday, October 30	19



Happy Birthday

God's blessings to those with November birthdays!

Shayna Padasdao	11/1
Hazel Yee	11/2
Soskey Felix	11/3
Jess Mane Robert	11/4
Richard Unarce	11/5
Sarah Kleinschmidt	11/6
Iustina Weia	11/7
Eric Arakawa	11/7
Ethleen Ieichy	11/7
Aska Michael	11/8
Randy Timonio	11/15
James Kealoha	11/15
Francisco Tagle	11/16
Shazlyn Padasdao	11/16
Jeremy Bush	11/17
James Fitzpatrick	11/18
Laura Iwami	11/19
Nethleen Neeto	11/19
Alfonso Suyat	11/21
Charlemagne Julian	11/21
Lerry Runes	11/24
Keira Ho	11/13
Yenchy Repaky	11/25
Erthleen Repaky	11/25
Madilta Nakayama	11/26
Jack Marlow	11/27
Jeanette Wong	11/28
Camerynn Michael	11/28
Laura Lum	11/29

© 1999 Rita Portlock. More at LighthouseJournal.org/Cartoons



Sunday School News

The Sunday School enrollment keeps on growing to over 50 children! Thanks to Preston with acolyte instructions on Saturdays and Mary Anne's baking skills we have a great band of acolytes and a lot of communion bread for all.

Thanks to **Ajaon Chen, Seine and Fane Lino**, the children are learning music, music, music! New songs, new instruments. On All Saints Day, the children lifted their voices in song— *Oh When the Saints Go Marching In*—and some played the ukulele and guitar!

The children in classroom B are busy with Jamie and the garden, look in the garden and see their new sign—thanks to **Mrs. Doris Fan**. In Classroom A the children will be doing crafts with Mrs. Fan, using the photography skills of **Tea Gierlach** to show off all God's children! Fane and **James Fitzpatrick** have been really busy planning special field trips and excursions in the upcoming weeks. And please note the beautiful mural the Youth have painted on the Pua Lane fence.

In December, during Advent, the Sunday School will be asking you for your loose change. We know **Uncle Stuart Ching** has been saving all those coins in his car for a year... the monies collected this year will go to the families involved with the Icodei program in Kenya. A small amount of change will make a large impact on the people.

Thank you to all who have been so generous in your donations to the children, especially during October, the Halloween treats for the Sunday School and the festivities on All Hallows' Eve!

God's Promise

I didn't promise you skies painted blue
Not all colored flowers all your days through
I didn't promise you, sun with no rain
Joys without sorrows, peace without pain.
All that I promise is strength for this day,
Rest for my worker, and light on your way.
I give you truth when you need it, my help from above,
Undying friendship, my unfailing love.
I never did promise you crowns without trials,
Food with no hard sweat, your tears without smiles,
Hot sunny days without cold wintry snows,
No vict'ry without fightin', no laughs without woes.
I sure didn't say I'd give you heaven on earth,
A life with no labor no struggles no deaths,
No earthquakes no dry spells, no fire flames no droughts,
No slaving no hungers, no blizzards no blights.
I promise you power, this minute this hour,
The power you need when you fall down to bleed,
I give you my peace, and my strength to pull home
My love for all races all creeds and all kinds.

-Woody Guthrie



Thanksgiving Day Service Thursday, Nov. 28th • 9:00 am

The Altar Guild has traditionally decorated the altar with fruits and vegetables for this service. Please share your harvest and bring your donations to the church office by Wednesday morning, November 27th. We will also be receiving canned and non-perishable food items for our Food Pantry.

We are thankful for all God's blessings—
please be generous!